

# A New Meaning of Educational TV: from School to Audience's Everyday Life

Resignificar la educación televisiva: desde la escuela a la vida cotidiana

## RESUMEN

A través del análisis de la recepción de diversos géneros televisivos latinoamericanos, surgen dimensiones de una conceptualización de lo educativo –desde el punto de vista de los sujetos instalados en sus prácticas sociales cotidianas– más vinculada a lo afectivo que a lo cognitivo, conocimiento generado por la escuela formal. En este sentido, la programación televisiva es «re-significada» como educativa a partir de las necesidades de las audiencias, situadas en ambientes hogareños particulares. Los estudios de recepción muestran la calificación recurrente como «programa educativo» hacia espacios que, según la denominación académico-profesional, son periodísticos, magazines de entretenimiento y ficcionales. Esto plantea una oportunidad para las organizaciones y profesionales de la televisión, en términos de contribuir a mejorar la calidad de vida de las personas y, especialmente, de los niños y adolescentes. En el contexto latinoamericano, los retos de la televisión pública se sitúan en desplazar el eje desde lo propagandístico/coyuntural hacia procesos comunicacionales audiovisuales que den cuenta de las necesidades verbalizadas en diversas investigaciones en la región, especialmente para los grupos sociales que viven en condiciones de vida carenciadas, no solo en lo económico, sino también en ambientes marcados por la inseguridad y la exclusión étnica.

## ABSTRACT

When analyzing the reception of different Latin American television genres, it can be seen how education is conceptualized –from the point of view of subjects inserted in their daily social practices– as more greatly linked to affectivity than to cognition, thus distinguishing it from knowledge generated through formal schooling. In this sense, television programming has come to be redefined as educational, based on the audiences' needs in each of their different home environments. Reception studies show that various programs are frequently classified as «educational programs», including news/journalistic programs, entertainment and fictional shows. This presents an opportunity for organizations and professionals of television to contribute to the improvement in the quality of life of their audience members, especially children and adolescents. With regards to the specific challenges that Latin American public television face, it is necessary to shift the axis from propaganda/situational to audiovisual programs that take into account the verbalized needs of various research projects in the region, especially for social groups that suffer not only financial disadvantages, but also those dealing with insecurity and ethnic exclusion.

## KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

TV, recepción, resignificación, telenovela, TV infantil, género televisivo, audiencia, exclusión social.  
Broadcasting TV, reception process, meaning from the audience, telenovela, children's TV, audience.

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## 1. Introduction

Both in Europe and Japan, TV (especially public television) was originally conceived as educational, in the way that it aided formal instruction in schools in countries devastated as a result of World War II. The initial idea of teaching through open and generalized public TV has since then evolved towards a more efficient model of instructional TV, operated by specialized and segmented channels; in this way, open television would appear to have lost its educational function. Reception studies on Latin American audiences show that various programs are frequently classified as «educational programs», including news/journalistic programs, entertainment and fictional shows. This article will discuss research on the audience's new understanding of what is «educational».

## 2. New educational meaning for the audience

During the 1980s, the Chilean research center CENECA, created during the period of dictatorship (1973-1990) and supported by international aid, carried out research studies on television reception in rural areas of Chile, as well as in lower-class urban sectors in the capital city of Santiago, which were aimed at boosting active reception. The perception of TV by male and female adolescents and adults was studied throughout the country; perceptions were compared among base groups and leaders of these groups. Several complementary techniques were used to collect data: surveys, on-site focus groups, and individual interviews.

### 2.1. The resignified meaning of reporting

The program «Special Report», a journalistic reporting show, was first aired on TVN (a national channel operated by the dictatorship) in 1984 and achieved high ratings in the sectors being studied. It was appreciated by poorer sectors that, ironically, were very critical of the informative services of TVN, a channel known for its pro-dictatorship propaganda. This appreciation and perception of the journalistic program as being educational forced researchers to work with the groups in order to understand the semantics verbalized by the same audience (they discarded the possibility of disqualifying the audience's interpretation as «uninformed» or «abnormal»), and they concluded that the «educational» classification of the program was made up of two complementary aspects:

a) The topics or contents presented on the show were important for dealing with and improving the

daily life of the family of the audience; thus the content considered educational was different from the curricular topics presented in formal schooling.

b) Secondly, the way the program was created and produced was considered educational, where the opinions of a journalist, television host or academic expert were not so important as the those of people who the audience believed were more like them; the experiential/testimonial form of expression appeared highly attractive, believable and was considered educational (Fuenzalida & Hermosilla, 1989).

This «educational» classification could be contrasted with the negative perception by members of the middle and upper classes, who saw the show as sensationalist, or yellow press. Reinterpretation, reclassification and resignification were academic terms that emerged to explain the audience's perception of «educational» content.

### 2.2. The program «Tierra Adentro» (Inland)

It was possible to redesign this program (aired in post-dictatorship Chile by TVN and then by other channels) with information obtained in the previously mentioned studies on television reception in rural areas. The analysis of the narrative structure led to the concept «Competitive reporting», a narrative form that presents the actions taken by a person to face situations that he or she must resolve; it puts the focus back on the subject and his or her actions; that is, the prominence is focused on the acting subject rather than on the narrator, or on experts, or social work agencies, or public agencies. From its first design inspired by a thirst for innovation, where the protagonists/speakers teach rural audiences, the program evolved to present «on-site» protagonists/speakers, highlighting their actions and creativity.

The program wanted to bring to the TV screen the physically expressed role of the rural speaker in order to broaden this role for the audience, through recognition and identification, as a way to generate empowerment through communications. Highlighting the role of working-class subjects was a means to promote their activities and creative initiative. The stimulation of empowerment through recognition and identification is considered indispensable in cultures where the working classes have been traditionally represented as being passive, resigned to fatalism, and incapacitated.

This fatalism and incapacitation have deliberately been promoted by some social leaders that attempt to show them as the only «saviors» in social situations of adversity (Fuenzalida, 2005).

### 2.3. Understanding genre: docudrama

In 1993 TVN began to air on prime time the police docudrama «Mea Culpa»; the program was a dramatization of real crime cases, in which criminals often appeared on screen to repent of their criminal behavior. The most common denomination of TV docudramas alludes to a hybrid between the informative genre (that documents a real event related to serious misfortunes) and a story represented fictionally by actors, which narrates the uncertainties and insecurities regarding the case. In Latin America, the genre is created by following the narrative form of a soap opera.

Rating measurements indicated that the docudrama «Mea Culpa» was very popular, especially with the working class sectors. Qualitative reception studies showed polarized perceptions. Members of the upper classes perceived the program as sensationalist, tear-jerking, and believed it should be taken off the air since it could cause damage. The middle and working classes, although critical of some aspects of the program, saw it as realistic, with the potential to prevent crime, as well as educational. At times, parents admitted having called their young children to come watch the program and discuss it as a family, since they saw it as a program that would teach about real life and its dangers.

The interpretation of the program as educational, this time in the genre of docudrama, once again pointed towards the fact that it was perceived as educational because the topics related to the real lives of the audience and because it followed a testimonial/experiential storytelling structure.

Later reception studies on other docudramas showed that the audience often participates in family discussions, comparing their own life experiences with the fictional experiences of the real people-characters represented, and often have group discussions about what they would do in similar situations. There is a cognitive-emotional relationship of recognition. The fictional/real plot provides an intra-textual

representation of situations that are relevant to their own lives – that is, the representation contains analogy and verisimilitude. The topics presented, the speakers, and the testimonial/experiential narrative structure are considered to be realistic for audiences that involve themselves in the text. Along with the process of recognition, there is also a process of emotional-cognitive identification, as defined by Jauss (1982) to explain the receptor's identification with fictional characters, that is, their own experiences (of the audience) with the experiences of the other (fictional).

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### 2.4. Documentary reality

This genre, which has been introduced recently and has received wide acceptance on primetime television, has also been interpreted by the audience as going in the «educational» direction, but also at times a deliberate use of these new interpretations. The documentary-reality shows a substantial preservation of its informative-documentary character; it presents topics that affect everyday people (as in docudramas) such as diseases, vices, mistakes, cheating, jails, and reinsertion into society. However, the narration is not represented by unknown actors: the narration is like a documentary with the on-screen presence of the same subjects that suffer misfortunes, with their names, homes and daily lives. The subjectivity of the particular individual, which appears extra-textually,

provides an audiovisual narration and representation of a problem that is not only individual but also more general, and therefore allows the identification of a wider audience, through analogy and plausibility. The presence of the same affected person in the audiovisual narration, with an extra-textual life, represents the factual nature and provides the documentary/indicative meaning to the extra-textual reality of the events. They are narrations of real and difficult cases, in which the topic is presented in a personalized manner, that is, from individual subjectivity, and not from the conceptual generalization of a topic taken from existential life. This personalized narration makes

examples of both good and bad production (Fuenzalida, 2000). The sensationalism of some programs, and even complicity with corrupt politicians (Fujimore and Montesinos in Peru, both currently in prison), cannot cause the general condemnation of these genres, since there are some programs that are well done, entertaining and responding to the educational expectations of the audience.

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Many channels broadcast other service programs that are focused on topics of health, legal consultation, searching for missing people, affective relationships, conflict resolution and others. The structure is different from the morning shows: they present topically-segmented contents, with a

relatively empathetic host that receives questions and testimonies from people that come on the show or call in. There are sensationalist programs, which are accused of buying testimonies or paying actors to fake on-screen confrontations; these sensationalist programs are often interpreted by the audience as more or less comedic shows. Programs appreciated as educational have, on the other hand, hosts that demonstrate traits of reliability, affective warmth, seriousness, consultation with qualified professionals, and an emotional tone that tries to communicate assertiveness and positive energy to the audience. Clearly the audience puts into play their ability to empathize with the host, to recognize situations that affect their daily lives, and to identify with people/speakers whose testimony is considered useful for learning to face similar situations.

**A «television education», as opposed to curricular schooling, carried out in lucid-emotional audiovisual language could help enhance capabilities such as empowerment and reliance, which nowadays are considered to be indispensable to overcome social adversity. These new perspectives with educative materials of Latin American audiences could also be useful for television channels throughout Africa and Asia whose television audiences have daily problems in the home which are much closer to those of Latin American than those of developed countries.**

it attractive and provokes a greater understanding of the contents.

### **2.5. Morning shows and service programs**

Another genre includes morning shows that tend to accompany housewives while they perform their housework. There is evidence that they at their best they offer a mix between entertaining company and educational help for certain home needs, in order to improve the quality of family life and resolve problems at home, and to deal with psychosomatic diseases, poor sexual and emotional relations, domestic violence, low school performance, drugs and others; but also social problems such as poor quality health, education, safety and other services.

These genres have become popular in morning television programming in Latin America, with

## 2.6. Exploration of female identity in soap opera fictions

An important part of female educational expectations has to do with seeing the issue of female identity expressed on TV, the exploration of different possibilities for women to live and to act. This is a topic of not only an intellectual and academic nature, but rather one that vitally affects female existence.

Before presenting some of the cases of educational interpretations in soap operas, we should first review the changing perceptions of gender. In effect, the soap opera has been shown by Latin American TV since the 1980s within an atmosphere of strong disapproval: it is stigmatized by the cultural elite as a third-world primitive narrative; the male audience makes fun of the stories directed towards women; the first feminist criticism considered it to be alienating for women; and social leaders have repeated this criticism. Carlos Kunde (1988) synthesizes these points of view in his criticism of soap operas on the Red Globo de Brasil (a Brazilian television channel): they are perceived as a pleasurable form of anesthesia or sedative in order to preserve the daily alienation of the exploited worker and the submission of the Latin American woman. Latin America in the 80s experienced a process of gender revision, led by Jesus Martín Barbero from Colombia (1992): he investigated its origins, which seems more tied to melodramatic pop culture and oral narrative; under this new perspective, the soap opera has slowly moved away from its image as sub-literature or bastardization of the written narrative.

One of the most important conclusions of some reception studies is that the fiction of the soap opera allows for the exploration of situations and characters related to the daily lives of women and families: events, aspirations, possible models, or alternative courses of action. Recognition and exploration of situations, and identification with characters, are processes that the audience actively carries out as a result of the soap opera narrative and in dialogue with their own experiences. In this broader sense, it is possible to talk about the «educational» resignification done by the audience with regards to soap operas. Some studies on soap opera reception allow these educational interpretations to be illustrated.

Fadul (1993) along with other Brazilian researchers, when examining 25 years of Brazilian soap operas, have shown the introduction of new female roles in the fictions, and conclude that the soap opera provided an early introduction to the modern day controversies on female identity, much more so than the written press. Fadul has documented how

the soap opera has provoked a more specific discussion within families about the aspirations between girls and their mothers, and the consequences of these new forms of life in the postponement of pregnancy and birth control (Fadul & al., 1996; Hornik & McAnany, 2001).

In Uruguay, Rosario Sánchez has studied the reception of Brazilian soap operas through in-depth interviews with some women (Sánchez, 2000). The reception shows the process of in which the audience gets involved with or distances itself from the text; this process refers to confrontations with the own lives of the audience and on topics that resonate strongly with them. In this sense, it is the environmental culture that will define the topics of greater confrontational interest: submitting to or dominating a situation, traditional women versus modern day women, and the path to liberation through learning for some of the characters.

A reception study on the Mexican soap opera «María Isabel» (aired by Televisa) by Mexican-American teenagers is indicative of resignified interpretations, based on the lives of the viewers. These were second generation immigrants in the United States with permanent cultural ties to their relatives in Mexico and with exposure to Mexican television programming, particularly soap operas. The heroine of the soap opera was an indigenous young girl who is inserted into the life of the Mexican aristocracy in Mexico City, but without wanting to lose her own original indigenous identity. The young viewers saw the situation of the heroine of the program from their own complex emotional experience of being inserted into U.S. society but without wanting to forget their Mexican roots. (Mayer, 2003).

## 3. Education in children's shows

Another case is the educational re-conceptualization of children's TV programs. According to information on the ethnography of child consumption at home, children return psycho-somatically exhausted from school (performance situation), due to long days, and they are sometimes frustrated and humiliated by their poor performance, by violence among classmates or by teachers. This exhaustion is certainly accentuated in poor and undernourished sectors. When coming back home from school, the existential/situational emotional state of the children in front of the TV is primarily to rest and relax both physically and psychologically. Mothers typically feed their children at this time, while the children eat and relax watching TV, sometimes simultaneously playing, fighting, reading or

doing homework, etc. Neurobiology indicates that the move from a performance situation to another of rest is accompanied by a biochemical change in the parasympathetic autonomous nervous-motor system: the system stops secreting adrenaline and other neurotransmitters appropriate for attention and tension associated with performance activities, and then, begins to secrete endorphins and serotonins, neurotransmitters for psychosomatic situations of relaxation and rest. Television consumption at home is then coupled with rest.

But also the manner of producing children's television is changing, and this implies different symbolic representations of the child and the adult within the text (Mannetti, 1998). There is evidence of a move away from the structural form developed initially for children's programs, in which an adult directed (present on screen or off-camera voice) the children's television program. This model was taken from school: the adult teacher that teaches the child, who must passively learn knowledge from the adult. The new programs symbolically represent children in an active and protagonist role, carrying out activities and tasks in which they show themselves to be capable of creative initiative and intelligent problem-solving; «Bob the Builder» (US, 1999) and «Dora the Explorer» (US, 2000) are emblematic of these changes.

An analysis of various children's programs, especially animated, shows other recurrent structures. Television works with playful-dramatic structures that constitute generative models, in the sense that they are the creative basis of many programs; these generative models constitute playful-symbolic forms of representation of the child within the text (Fuenzalida, 2005).

Some children's shows that kids enjoy watching are based on a basic generative model of the clumsy adult character who poorly or clumsily performs activities that, as an adult, he or she should perform well. The structure is even more eloquent when representing child characters that carry out activities that the clumsy adults cannot. This structure appears in the series «Inspector Gadget»: the adult inspector is a klutz, despite all of his surprising gadgets; it is his young niece (Penny) and her dog (Brain) who resolve the police cases. Film has used this structure very successfully and enthusiastically in movie series like «Home Alone». In many cartoons we find another very basic generative structure that is notably attractive for children: the fight between weak and strong. This is the traditional structure of «Tom and Jerry», and with the incessant attempts of the cat Sylvester to catch the

canary (Tweety Bird). The structure appears in cartoons about sports competitions where the weakest confront the strongest and most deceitful boys. Chaplin used this model of circus clowns and took it to his short films, where he appeared as a weak little man fighting against a giant, and other physically enormous characters. Children's identification with the playful-dramatic plots of cartoons is related to the reinterpretation done by psychiatrist Bruno Bettelheim on traditional fairy tales; these are attractive because they confirm the ability of the child-weak person to survive in a complex, adverse, violent and a hostile world where children can be abandoned by their own parents or devoured by ogres and witches. For Bettelheim, the playful nature allows children to understand their emotions, strengthening their sense of self while suggesting positive reactions before adverse and violent situations, allowing them to overcome their worries, feelings of despair and weakness, lack of affection and insecurity (Bettelheim, 1980).

### 3.1. Education in new children's TV programs

The most traditional concept of what is considered «educational» in children's TV programs was defined by adults, and was associated with schooling: «educational and quality» programs were considered as those directed at improving children's performance in school (pre-school, reading, numbers, scientific information, etc.) and certain socially desirable values.

The playful-dramatic structures mentioned come into contact, on the other hand, with the motivations and affective needs of the child. While watching these entertainment shows for psychosomatic rest, through humorous pleasure of recognition and playful identification, the child can feel formative attitudes of happiness and strength for growing in the world. These TV programs can, then, precisely boost affective and attitudinal areas that are mostly neglected in school and family formation. It is possible to notice the influence of these new post-rationalist and post-Cartesian conceptualizations that highlight the value of emotion in anthropogenesis: the conscience begins as a feeling under Damasio's theory (2000); according to this author, the human-ontogenetic structure is existentially bi-perceptual: emotional and rational; the mere rational-linguistic conscience is not enough for proper human and social life.

In this way, the concept of the formative potential of children's programs has become disassociated with cognitive contents and formal schooling educational forms (and therefore from the TV representation of

the professor/host), and is assuming more of the development of social and affective aspects, such as self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities to confront the challenges of growing up and overcoming adversity, through identification with the characters on children's TV shows.

#### 4. Reception of education, television, entertainment

Research on over 20 years of reception of genres reformulated as educational by audiences requires a re-conceptualization of the relationship between open TV –fictional entertainment– and education. Ethnographic research within the Latin American home shows cultural-educational expectations that are accentuated in the working and middle classes; this is not related to the formal schooling of children or to the systematic training of adolescents or adults, an instructive function that is considered to belong exclusively to the school and other formal agencies. These educational expectations, on the other hand, are associated with learning to solve problems and adversity that emerge in daily home life (Fuenzalida, 2005). This «educational» reformulation presents some important characteristic changes.

a) First, it breaks with the initial synonymy between TV education and formal schooling, while presenting expectations to learn about existential situations in the home and problem-solving related to the daily lives of the audience.

b) Second, learning occurs from within the spatial-temporal situation of reception – entertainment and more through emotional identification than through analytical-conceptual reasoning. Unlike formal schooling and professional training, these situational educational expectations are woven within television entertainment, and not within curricular systemizations. In television shows, the testimonial experience (fictional or real) is more valued as educational by the audience than conceptual presentations by academic experts with general rules. The new understanding of the human cognitive-

emotional bi-perception restores entertainment's potential for playful-reflexive pleasure. Entertainment is appreciated for its potentially productive aspect, as an exploratory experience of other possible situations and behaviors.

c) Third, learning requires the participation and active interest of the audience in relation to the topic presented; interaction with the program and the involvement of the audience is key, and it does not support the old assumption of a passive and alienated receptor before a dominantly and deterministically omnipotent text.

d) Fourth, the study on home audiences shows six concepts related to the reception processes, concepts

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that were once discarded in academic theory about audience/TV interaction. These are:

- The importance of the concept of the reception situation, such as the socio-cultural space-time from which the audiences are interpreting what they see. In the past, the receptor appeared abstract, without socio-cultural insertion or characteristics. The reception processes brings up the social context from which the receptor interprets and the cultural capital of the audience, with whose resources they interact with the television text. The concept of the situation of reception also offers useful rules for producing texts that are appropriate for audiences situated in different space-times.

- The concept of intra-textual representation of the audiences themselves within the genres and programs; in the audiovisual language, representation is analogous-indicatively and substantially through the «signifying body» (Verón, 2001). This semiotic type of indicativeness explains that many sectors of the audience appreciate the experiential representation of problems and particular situations embodied in testimonial subjects, more than verbal speeches with general laws, typical of academic abstraction.

- The processes of intra-textual readings of the audiences regarding singular programs; intra-textual readings about the program announcers, but also the intra-textual activity of comparing statements and receptors, according to the socio-cultural capital and situation of reception.

- The concept that describes the receptive processes of recognition (or non-recognition), a concept that has a cognitive touch where the receptor subject compares his or her own condition intellectually or rationally (from his or her cultural capital) to the iconic-indicative representation.

- The process of identification (or not) with the subjects represented in the text; the conceptualization of Jauss (1982) appears to be the best heuristic tool for understanding the affective processes that empirically occur in groups from the audience. This conception that is defined as the experience of oneself (receptor) within the fictional experience (different) is what best describes the complex comparative (emotional-fruitful) and educational-entertainment process.

- The processes of resignification and interpretation by the audiences; active processes, where the audiences interact with the texts and read them from their own cultural capital and situations of reception. They are not, thus, passive readings, inexorably imposed from the text, but interactive re-readings from the complex situations of reception of the audiences (ages, cultural capital, existential problems, etc.).

## 5. Home and TV: changes and limitations

The re-conceptualization about what is «educational», which has emerged from the daily lives of the Latin American television viewer, shows an overlapping of TV and home. This overlapping occurs in the broader cultural context of the current reformulation of home as a significant existential situation for audiences. To this effect, there are at least four macro-influences in the West that come together to influence the reinterpretation of the home:

a) In comparison to the steam energy tied to

industrial production (1775), one century later, Edison conceived the development of electrical energy tied to the home. Later, the telephone, radio and phonograph began to be incorporated into the home, and after World War II, there was a massive trend to equip the home with appliances. Electrical equipment tends to constitute the home as a center for entertainment; with the Internet, the home also has become a center for work and network communications.

b) The birth control pill in the 1960s separated Eros from conception and introduced a drastic change in sexual behavior and concepts. Film and TV massively represented the new eroticized body in physical/audiovisual signifiers, introducing bi-perceptual awareness (cognitive-emotional) of the audio-visualized body and sexuality. The new anthropological concept restored value to the body, sex and pleasure.

c) In the 1980<sup>s</sup>, there was a political-ideological crisis that dethroned the concept of the public space as the only place for psychological and historical realization; instead of conceiving the space and subjectivity of private life as historical-psychological alienation, renewed value was given to subjectivity and private life, as well as family and interpersonal emotional relationships.

d) Visibility and legitimacy of the home through the TV and publicity, fiction, daily programs; there was a surge of «lifestyle» home channels, such as Casa Club TV, Gourmet, People+Arts, Utilísima, Food & Wine, Home & Health, The Body Channel, etc.

These influences together tend to give value back to private home life and discredit the concept developed during the Enlightenment about the home as an existential situation of psychological and historical alienation. The limits between private and public life have been diluted and interpenetrate each other: important problems that occur within the private sphere receive visibility and become public problems, as is the case of domestic violence.

Within this Western context of culturally reformulating the home, Latin American shows some particularities: it is a region that has reached a level of 90% homes with television. But the region also shows insecurity and crime, with the highest homicide rates in the world, according to UN-Habitat. The region also exhibits the greatest income inequality in the world. There are still strong ethnic exclusions; public services do not manage to overcome colonially inherited problems such as mistreatment and deceit of the people. The Latin American home, the situation of reception of television broadcasting, is very different



from homes in North American countries; poverty affects 34.1% of Latin American homes, that is, 189 million people; 76 million of them live in destitution, with access to less than 1.25 dollars a day, the limit determined by the World Bank to define destitution (CEPAL, 2009). This context helps us understand the educational expectations towards the TV to face difficult daily problems. The new conceptualization of what is educative-television opens two windows of opportunity tele-vision which is effectively contributing to Latin American audiences with their own characteristics and necessities:

- On the one hand, the possibility to make mass-reception television programs in diverse entertainment genres with themes pertaining to the problems and necessities of the audience's daily life.

- On the other hand, children's television representing awareness or rather the exploration of the children's own emotions, the enhancing of their self-esteem, and securing, through fictional identification, of the self-confidence in their internal capabilities of growth and achievement. Digital technology allows a national public channel that is targeted at the child audience.

A «television education», as opposed to curricular schooling, carried out in lucid-emotional audiovisual language could help enhance capabilities such as empowerment and reliance, which nowadays are considered to be indispensable to overcome social adversity. These new perspectives with educative materials of Latin American audiences could also be useful for television channels throughout Africa and Asia whose television audiences have daily problems in the home which are much closer to those of Latin American than those of developed countries.

But the same Latin American context also shows the limits of the educational expectations that the audience places on TV. Television has the real possibility to help people and groups that affect adversity in their home lives, and this educational possibility of TV is consistent with a recent trend in social action that wagers that –more than measuring the shortcomings of the poor– we should diagnose their abilities and resources, in order to strengthen them and convert them into active subjects of their own survival. But this potential of TV does not mask the fact that the region requires important macro social

and political changes. These limits must be recognized, although it will not be possible to develop them in this text. We will refer you to other texts in which we also present the expectations of the Latin American audiences with regards to political action, and where Public TV clearly appears as a form of communication that must abandon its traditional function of propaganda for current dictators, leaders and governors; it must, instead, assume the function of communicating in favor of the audiences, contributing to an improvement in the quality of regional politics with important renewed political communications (Fuenzalida, 2007).

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